



United States Senator
Richard Shelby
REPORTS TO ALABAMA



**IN RECOGNITION OF PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MONTH
— EARLY DETECTION CAN BE KEY TO SURVIVAL**

Every 15 minutes a man dies of prostate cancer in the United States. In fact, about 42,000 men die from the disease each year. In all, about one in five men will develop the disease over their lifetime. Despite these alarming statistics, prostate cancer does not receive the attention other cancers receive—a fact that may be representative of the gender it affects most directly.

While men, like myself, are less inclined to discuss their health and go to the doctor for regular checkups, treatable illnesses can become deadly when not detected early. Prostate cancer falls into this category. Despite its potential deadliness and the speed with which these types of cancers tend to develop, early detection can make a difference.

I am living proof that early de-

tection and treatment can mean the difference between life and death. In early 1994—at the urging of my wife, Annette—I scheduled an appointment with my doctor for an annual checkup. Annette, like many wives, has always been diligent about her own health. She schedules regular checkups and, thankfully, has encouraged me to do the same. As a result of this checkup and the routine tests performed, my prostate cancer was detected early. It was treated surgically with no additional treatment necessary. I'm alive today because of that checkup and those routine tests. I'm alive today because Annette urged me to pay attention to my health.

Since my prostate cancer was diagnosed, I have joined with other prostate cancer survivors in trying to increase awareness not only about the

potential deadliness of the disease, but the importance of early detection for survival. It is my hope, and the hope of others who speak openly about this disease, that more men will be encouraged to take action and get tested early and often.

As we recognize September as Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, I urge anyone reading this column to pay attention to your health. Be diligent. If you are a man in your late 30's, early 40's or over, go to your doctor—even if you don't think anything is wrong with you. Prostate cancer does not show its deadliness in the form of symptoms until it is almost too late for treatment. If you are a wife, a mother, a sister—urge the men in your life to have regular checkups. Until we have a cure for this and other forms of cancer—early detection is our best defense.

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